REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in the present application. All of these claims stand rejected. The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections in light of the following remarks.

First, Applicants thank the Examiner for granting an interview on March 25, 2005, with Applicants' representative. During the interview, Applicants argued that the cited prior art (i.e., Block et al.) does not teach all of the elements of the claims. As an example, Applicants argued that Block does not teach or suggest scrambling of a signal when at least one associated control indicator compares unfavorably to a content control setting. Applicants also argued that the scrambling taught by Block is actually encryption of a transmitted signal that is not used for control of content, and that the scrambling taught by Block is performed at the central station equipment (i.e., transmitting station) rather than at the viewer station equipment. The Examiner then asserted that Block nonetheless teaches scrambling and the claims do not make clear that the scrambling is of a certain type, nor that it is performed in the graphics controller, and, thus, Block anticipates the claim language. The Applicants disagree with this assertion, as will be argued below.

Notwithstanding the above, Applicants submit clarifying amendments with this response amending claims 1, 7, and 13 to include language that the scrambling is accomplished in a graphics controller or module. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that such changes might distinguish over Block. Nonetheless, Applicants submit that these amendments are not believed to be related to patentability of these claims, but merely serve to more clearly define which device accomplishes scrambling. Applicants respectfully request entry of these amendments and submit that no new matter has been added. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, in FIGs. 1 and 2 and the accompanying discussion on pages 4-8 of the specification.

Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Block et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,675,384). The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration of the rejection for the following reasons.

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With respect to independent claim 1, the Office Action has asserted that Block teaches all of the claimed elements including "generating a scramble control signal," "providing the scramble control signal to at least one of a video scrambler and an audio scrambler," and "scrambling at least a portion of the at least one of video, audio, and text content to produce scrambled content." It is noted that these claimed elements occur "when the at least one associated content control indicator compares unfavorably to the at least one content control setting." With regard to these elements, the Office Action appears to assert that because Block teaches that the program signal may be either scrambled or not scrambled when transmitted by central station equipment 10, the reference therefore teaches the claimed elements. The Applicants respectfully disagree for the following reasons.

Block, in particular, teaches that a program signal from the central station equipment 10 may be either scrambled (e.g., encrypted) or not scrambled (clear). (See col. 3, lines 50-54). This disclosure, however, does not teach or suggest the generation of a scramble control signal when at least one associated content control indicator compares unfavorably to a content control setting, the content control indicator being received with a content signal on a graphics controller. Instead, the actual teaching of Block is sending a scrambled content signal from the central station equipment 10 to particular viewer station equipment 20. The content signal is sent with an appropriate scramble code used at the view station equipment 20 to decrypt the encrypted or scrambled content. In simple terms, Block teaches scrambling content at a central station equipment and then transmitting the scrambled signal with information allowing it to be decrypted at receiving equipment.

In contrast, present claim 1 features receiving a content signal with a content control indicator at a graphics controller and, subsequently, generates a scramble control signal, provides the scramble control signal to the video scrambler and/or audio scrambler to then scramble the content prior to being rendered. Thus, Block and the claimed invention are simply not the same. Block transmits scrambled content for later decryption at receiving equipment, whereas the present claimed method receives content and then subsequently scrambles the content if the content control indicator is not compatible with the content control settings within the equipment rendering the content. Accordingly, all of the elements of claim 1 are not met by Block, and this claim is therefore believed allowable over Block.

With respect to independent claims 7 and 13, these claims feature elements similar to method claim 1. Accordingly, these claims are also believed to be allowable. Additionally, claim 13 specifically includes a graphics controller that performs the generation of the scramble control signal and the scrambling of content. As argued previously, Block simply does not teach or suggest such a feature.

Additionally, Applicants note that it would not be obvious to modify Block to arrive at the claimed features of claims 1-22 of the present application. Specifically, Block is directed to a method and apparatus for information labeling at a central station. Through use of the content labels attached at the control station, viewer station equipment can block or substitute portions of the program based on the comparison. Although this operation may achieve a similar end result as the claimed features (i.e., ultimately preventing certain content from being displayed), the way in which this is accomplished by Block is very different from the present claims. The invention of Block simply prevents content from being delivered to a modulator based on comparison to a label. In contrast, the present claims includes generation at a graphics controller of the scramble control signal and inclusion of a scrambler to produce scrambled content at the graphics controller, thereby preventing intelligible display of the content. Since these two methodologies and apparatus are quite disparate, it would not make sense for one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Block using the presently claimed features; namely generation of a scramble control signal and scrambling content at the viewer station equipment.

Moreover, the methodology of Block requires a central station equipment to specifically generate a label recognizable by label interpretation units within each of the viewer station equipment. In contrast, the presently claims, among other things, concern content rendering at a graphics controller or module and may utilize any number of content control indicators, such as V-chip indicators, for effecting scrambling by the graphics controller. Block simply does not have this versatility, nor does the teaching of Block lend itself to such versatility since the particular label identification at a central station equipment is essential to teachings of Block.

In light of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that a Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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